



OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

December 1, 2003

To: OPI MASS Representatives

From: Madalyn Quinlan, Chief of Staff

Subject: Summary of OPI Activities for December 2003

Here is a summary of the current activities at the Office of Public Instruction for December 2003. This summary can also be found at www.opi.state.mt.us/MASSUpdates/.

Office of the State Superintendent

OPI's Yellow School Bus Tour

State Superintendent Linda McCulloch and 15 members of her staff are boarding the bus to visit Bozeman Public Schools on December 2, 2003. The Yellow School Bus Tour is an informal way for OPI staff to listen and learn about the current situations and diverse needs of educators across Montana. If you would like more information, contact OPI Tour coordinator, Jan Lombardi at jlombardi@state.mt.us or 444-1641.

Highlights of State Superintendent Linda McCulloch's Activities for November 2003:

- ♣ Chaired the November 3rd meeting of the School Renewal Commission
- ♣ Attended the Ed Forum meetings, the monthly Land Board meeting and another school renewal commission meeting
- ♣ Met with the Western MASS group at the November meeting
- ♣ Attended the winter conference for the Council of Chief State School Officers
- ♣ Developed theme for the 2004 Reading Summit
- ♣ Participated in the Board of Public Education meeting
- ♣ Hosted a visit by the Teacher Assistance Corp from the U.S. Department of Education
- ♣ Welcomed a group of Russian leaders visiting Montana as part of The Center for Russian Leadership's Open World 2003 program.
- ♣ Worked to develop a system for determining the AYP status of small ("TBD") schools
- ♣ Participated in a national conference call concerning CCSSO's database initiative
- ♣ Spoke to the Library Media administrator's class at Montana State University- Bozeman
- ♣ Participated in TV, radio, and newspaper interviews on a variety of education topics
- ♣ Attended the Board of Regent's meeting in Bozeman
- ♣ Attended the Griz/Cat Football game in Bozeman

Montana K-12 Public School Renewal Commission

The next meeting of the School Renewal Commission will be January 12th in Helena at the State Capitol. Information regarding membership, meetings and resources is available on the web: <http://www.discoveringmontana.com/gov2/css/boards/renewal/default.asp>. Contact: Kris Goss, Education Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor, at 406-444-3862 or kgoss@state.mt.us. OPI Contact: Madalyn Quinlan, mquinlan@state.mt.us or 406-444-3168.

November Board of Public Education Meeting

The OPI staff presented a variety of reports and one action item at the November Board of Public Education meeting. Reports included State Superintendent McCulloch's, No Child Left Behind by Nancy Coopersmith, the Assessment Report by Judy Snow and Madalyn Quinlan, the Annual Renewal Unit Report by Nancy Coopersmith and Carol Gneckow, a summary of Improvement Plans for the Advice and Deficiency Accreditation Status and the recommended procedure for renewal of Alternative Standard Requests by Al McMilin. The action item presented by OPI staff included the initial Alternative Standard Requests by Al McMilin. Please contact the individuals above if you need information about any of these topics. Contacts are Board of Public Education Executive Secretary Steve Meloy (406) 444-6576 or Deputy Superintendent Spencer Sartorius (406) 444-4434.

January Board of Public Education Meeting

The Board of Public Education will hold its next regular meeting January 15-16, 2004, in the Meeting Room of the Montana Higher Education Complex, 2500 Broadway, Helena, Montana. Tentative BPE agenda items from the OPI include the State Superintendent's Report, the Annual Transportation Report, an assessment update, an NCLB update and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey update. Contacts are Board of Public Education Executive Secretary Steve Meloy (406) 444-6576 or Deputy Superintendent Spencer Sartorius (406) 444-4434.

Adequate Yearly Progress: Small School AYP Process

The "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP) determination for Montana's 175 smallest schools begins this month. On December 1-2, five teams consisting of county superintendents, Montana educators and OPI specialists will meet at OPI to complete Phases I and II of the AYP determination process. Should a school not make AYP in either Phase I or Phase II, the school and/or parent district will be notified by December 5 and be given an opportunity to provide the teams any other information or data that may assist the teams in making a final determination in Phase III. That final review will take place on December 15-16 at OPI. There is no reason to supply OPI with any additional information, unless you are notified by the agency. OPI will provide schools with their official AYP determinations on the week of January 12th. The information will be released to the public the week of January 19th. As provided for by NCLB, any school wishing to appeal their AYP status will be given 30 days to file for a review as of the official notification on the week of January 12th. OPI Contact: Al McMilin, Assessment Specialist, 406-444-3128, amcmilin@state.mt.us.

Education Licensure: Licensure Renewal-Audits Coming in January

Educators who renewed their educator license during the 2003 renewal period may be subject to audit. According to Administrative Rule 10.57.218, applicants now submit only a listing of their professional development activities without documentation. The educator is responsible for maintaining official documentation to verify completion of activities during the term of the license. Those persons selected for audit will be required to submit verification of meeting the professional development requirements through official transcripts, original grade reports, or original renewal unit certificates. If an educator is unable to produce verification of renewal unit activities within 60 days from the date of the audit letter, the educator's license may be suspended or revoked by the Board of Public Education. Educators who renewed online, or used the new renewal application without submitting verification of renewal unit activities, should review their professional portfolio to determine that all transcripts, grade reports, and renewal unit certificates used for renewal units are official and ready to send to the Office of Public Instruction upon request. OPI Contact: Margaret Bowles (444-2580) or e-mail mbowles@state.mt.us.

Assessment

The November/December edition of the electronic newsletter, **Join Us in Measuring Progress** (JUMP), will be posted online on December 10, 2003 at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/assessment/newsletters/>.

Also, check out the **Assessment calendar**, which includes current information on important testing dates, deadlines, and training. <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/Assessment/calendar.pdf>

Preparing for the CRT:

Resources to assist teachers and administrators prepare for the administration of the Measured Progress test in Spring 2004 are available online at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/assessment/index.html>.

Workshop Videos: Teacher as Assessor and Examining Student Work

Videotapes of workshops developed and presented by Measured Progress ("Teacher as Assessor," spring 2003, and "Examining Student Work," Oct. 2003) are available for checkout through the Office of Public Instruction Resource Center. OPI Contact: Raelen Williard, rwilliard@state.mt.us or 406-444-2082.

Survey regarding the Future of the NRT Testing Requirement

For three years now, the State Board of Public Education has required that Montana students in grades 4, 8, and 11 take the Iowa Tests, which are "norm-referenced" tests. More recently, President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act requires states to use a "criterion-referenced" test to measure student performance. Beginning in Spring 2004, Montana's 4th, 8th and 10th grade students will take a criterion-referenced test (CRT) designed by Measured Progress, Inc. The administration of the criterion-referenced test is a condition of receiving federal education dollars.

These new federal testing requirements have prompted the Board of Public Education (BPE) and the OPI to examine the existing state assessment requirement. OPI has designed a survey to find out what Montana schools officials think should happen to the norm-referenced test after the spring 2004 administration.

The Office of Public Instruction has mailed a letter to each school system explaining the survey and providing a UserID and Password to access the survey. Superintendent McCulloch also sent a letter to every school board chair notifying them of the survey and encouraging them to discuss the school system's survey response with school administrators. The following is the timeline for the survey.

December 4, 2003	Survey is posted at http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Assessment
December 19, 2003	Deadline for completing survey
Jan. to March 2004	BPE Task Force on Assessment analyzes survey results
March 11-12, 2004	Recommendation made at BPE Meeting

Educational Opportunity and Equity

The Montana Association of Gifted and Talented Education (AGATE) announces its 24th annual spring conference, "Guiding Today's Explorers." The conference will be held at the Great Northern Hotel in Helena on April 22-24, 2004. Keynote speakers are Joseph Renzulli, Marcia B. Imbeau, and Maureen Niehart. The announcement and registration form can be found at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/gifted/AgateBroc.pdf>. OPI Contact: Kathy Mollohan, 406-444-4317.

Health Enhancement and Safety Division

Safe and Drug Free School Coordinators: Date Saver! Regional meetings in Billings and Missoula will be scheduled the first week of May. A consultant from the Region VII Comprehensive Center at the University of Oklahoma will present research that supports the link between student assistance programs and achievement. The Department of Health and Human Services will discuss adolescent suicide prevention and what will happen in 2004. A local school representative will describe their experiences with student drug testing. Registration forms will be distributed in January. OPI Contact: Cathy Kendall, 444-0829 or cakendall@state.mt.us.

An **Advanced HIV/AIDS/STD Teacher Training** will be offered in Billings on January 13, 2004. This training is designed for teachers of an HIV/AIDS/STD unit who are seeking more advanced teaching strategies and information regarding STDs, including HIV. OPI will offer this training for 5 renewal units towards recertification. The training will be held from 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. in the Lincoln Center of the Billings School Administration Building. Interested persons should register by calling Vivian Beals at 406-255-3825 or Susan Court, HIV/AIDS Education Specialist, OPI at 406-444-3178 or scourt@state.mt.us.

School Nutrition Program

The **verification process for free and reduced price applications** must be completed and a report submitted to School Nutrition Programs by December 15. OPI Contact: School Nutrition Programs (406) 444-2501.

Montana Schools recognized for implementing “best practices”

Two Montana school food service managers and their programs were recognized as "best practices" in the cover story of the November/December 2003 issue of the Western Dairy Council's *Mealtime Sampler*. Jayne Elwess was recognized for doubling the average daily breakfast count at Conrad Public Schools by starting a Grab 'n' Go Breakfast program. Cindy Giese was recognized for initiating creative fundraising efforts that provided funding for a new breakfast program in Lewistown. Congratulations to Jayne, Cindy, and their staff. OPI Contact: School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501.

Driver Education/Advanced Driver Education

Mailing of Traffic Education Resources

The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) traffic education fall mailing was late this year and mailed in early December. It included a variety of resources and information you may find useful in your district's traffic education programs. A packet was sent to each school, and to each approved TE teacher at their home address. Contact Jennifer Stuebing-Verbanac at (406) 444-4432 or Jstuebing-verbanac@state.mt.us for additional information.

Master Teacher Application

Applications to be recognized as a Montana Traffic Education Master Teacher were included in the fall traffic education mailing. Please consider if your district's driver education teacher should be recognized as a Master Teacher. This is not an award as we normally think, but acknowledgement of those deserving recognition. There is no limit to the number who can be acknowledged. All who qualify will be recognized at the Traffic Education conference in Great Falls this coming April. The Application sets a submittal deadline of December 30, 2003, but because of the lateness of the mailing, we are extending the submittal deadline until January

15, 2004. Applications are also available on the OPI Driver Education website at www.opi.state.mt.us/drivered. OPI Contact: David Huff at (406) 444-4396 or dhuff@state.mt.us.

Updated Traffic Education Administrative Manuals

The OPI publication, *Traffic Education Standards/Requirements/Procedures for High School Driver Education Programs* has been updated and is soon to be printed. This manual incorporates the changes in administrative rules governing driver education adopted over the last couple years. Updated copies will be distributed at the April 2004 TE conference in Great Falls, and will be available on the OPI driver education website by January 1, 2004. OPI Contact: Jennifer Stuebing-Verbanac, (406) 444-4432 or jstuebing-verbanac@state.mt.us.

Grant From Montana Highway Safety Office

The Montana Highway Safety Office of the Montana Department of Transportation has granted OPI a \$10,000 grant to update and revise the Montana Traffic Education Curriculum Guide. This is a two-year project and the grant covers the first of the two years. The award will partially pay for adapting curriculum presently being developed for Idaho to meet Montana's specific needs, standards and requirements. A committee of Montana traffic educators will be selected to assist in the project. OPI Contact: David Huff, (406) 444-4396 or dhuff@state.mt.us.

School Finance and Pupil Transportation

FY04 Budgets for each school district are posted on the OPI website. The budgets are in PDF format in Legal Entity order with any budget recalculations directly below the original. In order to find a specific school district, you will need to know the 4-digit legal entity number assigned to the district. To access the FY04 budgets, click on the following link.

<http://data.opi.state.mt.us/webinfo/maefairs/FY04%20Budgets/>. OPI Contact: Nica Carte, 444-4401 or ncarte@state.mt.us.

Preliminary Maintenance of Effort and Special Education Reversion Reports Posted

In late November, OPI e-mailed a notice to all districts and special education cooperatives regarding maintenance of effort (MOE) for ESEA Title programs, IDEA Part B and Preschool special education grants, and the state special education allowable cost funding reversion. This is the first year this process has been handled electronically. All district and special education cooperative clerks, district superintendents, special education directors, and county superintendents should review the information carefully. This process requires your immediate attention to correct any reporting errors on the FY2002-03 Trustees' Financial Summary that might have caused MOE or reversion problems. The deadline for corrections is December 20, so prompt action is critical. OPI Contact: Jim Oberembt, 444-1257 or joberembt@state.mt.us.

Governor Allocates Federal Economic Stimulus Monies to K-12 Education

On November 20, Governor Martz announced the distribution of \$2.7 million to K-12 education. The new money for schools comes from the original \$73 million the federal government sent to Montana as part of federal tax cut legislation. Here's how the \$2.7 Million for K-12 is allocated:

♣ District Technology Funds	\$1,750,000
♣ Reading First Program	\$450,000
♣ Secondary Vocational Education	\$250,000
♣ OPI - Tech assistance for NCLB	\$50,000
♣ Indian Education for All curriculum development	\$50,000
♣ K-12 Renewal Commission	\$25,000
♣ Montana School for Deaf & Blind	\$125,000

Technology Grants to be Distributed to School Districts in December

Of the new monies allocated to K-12, \$1.75 million is designated for district technology programs. The technology funds will be distributed to schools along with the December BASE aid payment and must be deposited in the Technology Fund (28) using revenue account 4650 - Miscellaneous Federal Grants/Revenue from OPI and expenditure program 465. Districts may not transfer these federal funds to another fund for expenditure. The Technology Fund is a budgeted fund so districts that intend to spend more in FY2004 than the amount currently budgeted for that fund will need to adopt a budget amendment. Alternatively, the additional funds may be held in reserve and budgeted for expenditure in FY2005 or beyond.

The funds are being distributed to districts under the provisions of MCA sections [20-9-533](#) and [20-9-534](#) and can be used for the purchase, rental, repair, maintenance, and depreciation of technological equipment including computers and computer network access, and for associated technical training for school district personnel. A spreadsheet showing the amount of each district's payment is posted on the OPI web site at

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/SchoolFinance/TechFund.pdf>. OPI Contacts: Bonnie Maze, 444-3249 or bmaze@state.mt.us, or Nancy Hall, 444-9852 or nhall@state.mt.us.

Note: In her November 20th announcement, the Governor stated that the technology monies could be used for the items listed in [20-9-533](#) and [20-9-375](#), MCA. However, the federal law requires that the federal monies (from the economic stimulus package) be used for items that are funded in the most recently approved state budget. HB 2 (L.2003) did not contain an appropriation tied to [20-9-375](#), so the Governor's office has since clarified that new monies can only be used for the purposes listed in [20-9-533](#), MCA.

Special Education Division

Limited Funding for Students with Significant Behavioral or Physical Needs

In the past, the Office of Public Instruction has made available limited funding for the costs associated with students with significant behavioral or physical needs served by the public schools. We will be making those funds available again some time after the first of the year. School districts should be looking for an announcement for the limited funding in January 2004. OPI Contact: Susan Bailey-Anderson at 406-444-2046 or sbanderson@state.mt.us.

Medicaid Update: Comprehensive School and Community Treatment

Comprehensive School and Community Treatment (CSCT) provides school-based mental health support to students with serious emotional disturbance. The program makes available, in the public school setting, professionally trained and licensed counselors and therapeutic mental health paraprofessionals to address the needs of children with serious emotional disturbance. In addition to helping selected students with their mental health needs, the program also offers schools an opportunity to reduce behavioral disruptions and thereby improve the quality of the school environment for all students.

CSCT services were first provided and paid for through the Addictive and Mental Disorders Division of the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS). During the time that CSCT services were provided by DPHHS, the services were at no cost to school districts (other than making building space available for the professionals providing the service). Because of budget constraints, the program ended in the summer of 2002.

Schools and providers of CSCT services requested that this program be reinstated. In response to these requests, DPHHS and OPI expanded the Medicaid refinancing project to

include reestablishment of CSCT services effective May 14, 2003. While there was no general fund appropriation to provide the state match required for Medicaid, reestablishment of CSCT services was made possible by schools providing the state match. This match was achieved not by a direct cash payment, but rather through a process called "certified match." The certified match process is an accounting method that verifies that district general fund money was spent in support of the program (i.e., secretarial support, building space, supplies, telephones, etc.).

Many public schools have recently entered into contracts with private providers to provide CSCT services. A number of schools have identified concerns surrounding CSCT services. These concerns, among other things, include added responsibilities in following complex Medicaid regulations.

CSCT services are available to all students with serious emotional disturbance, whether or not they are identified as eligible for special education. This feature results in CSCT services being more challenging for a school to implement than are the more traditional Medicaid billable services provided under a student's special education IEP. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), (the federal agency administering the Medicaid program), has different regulations and requirements for special education programs than the requirements they have for services provided outside of special education. For example, the "Free Care Rule" applies to services provided to students without disabilities but does not apply to services identified on a student's IEP. Also, programs provided under an IEP have the required state match certified by the Office of Public Instruction instead of the school district. Each of these factors contributes to the complications that districts will encounter when implementing CSCT services.

Participation in the CSCT program is entirely voluntary. For those districts that choose to provide CSCT services, we believe that the value of the service outweighs the added complications inherent in providing CSCT services.

In addition to CSCT services, the Medicaid refinancing project is now making available a variety of enhancements that were not formerly available to schools. These enhancements, that represent additional revenue opportunities for schools, include the following:

Initiation of the Medicaid Administrative Claiming Program (MAC)

The MAC program allows for reimbursement to districts for the administrative work that is performed to support the administration of Medicaid programs in schools. The following activities have been completed to implement this program:

1. A Cost Allocation Plan has been completed and submitted to CMS for approval.
2. Districts have signed Memorandums of Understanding to participate in the program.
3. Those participating districts have been trained, have submitted initial programmatic data and are currently participating in the random moment time study to determine percentages of time spent on reimbursable activities. We are currently in the middle of the first quarter of implementation, and we project that districts will receive reimbursement for this quarter in Spring 2004.
4. Beginning in the second quarter that commences January 2004, 36 districts are currently participating, representing over 70,000 general education students (ANB) from those districts.

Services Added to the School-Based (Direct Service Billing) Program

The following services have been added to the School-based direct service billing program beginning January 2003:

1. Psychological and Mental Health Services
2. Personal Care Paraprofessionals
3. Comprehensive School and Community Treatment Program

The following service has been approved by CMS and is currently being implemented beginning January 2004:

- ♣ Special Needs Transportation

The follow service has been submitted to CMS for approval:

- ♣ Special Education Service Coordination Case Management – This service would allow schools to bill Medicaid for case management services provided to students receiving special education services. A State Plan Amendment has been developed and submitted to CMS for approval. Once approval is received, this service can be offered for reimbursement.

Career, Adult and Technical Education Division

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education is soliciting Requests for Proposals for Carl D. Perkins Nontraditional Training and Employment Mini-Grants. Up to six \$1,000 grants will be awarded. All secondary schools are encouraged to submit a proposal. The deadline for proposals is December 12, 2003. Interested persons should download the MEMORANDUM at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/CTE/PY04MGNotice.pdf> and the REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/CTE/PY04RFP.pdf>. Questions? Contact George Burns, OCHE, (406) 444-9797, gburns@oche.montana.edu or Don Michalsky, OPI, (406) 444-4452, dmichalsky@state.mt.us.

News from the Commissioner of Higher Education

WUE (Western Undergraduate Exchange) 2004-2005

WUE is the Western Undergraduate Exchange, a program coordinated by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). Through WUE, students in western states may enroll in many two-year and four-year public college programs at a reduced tuition level: 150 percent of the institution's regular resident tuition. In all cases, WUE tuition is considerably less than nonresident tuition. The 2004-2005 WUE Handout now available at: <http://www.wiche.edu/SEP/WUE/PDF/WUE2004-2005handout.pdf>. OCHE Contact: Billie L. Rusek, Assistant for Academic & Student Affairs, (406) 444-0314, brusek@oche.montana.edu

The Montana Board of Regents **College Preparatory Program website** has a new web address, please visit <http://www.mus.montana.edu/hscp/index.html>. Find up to date information on college entrance, view current college preparatory curriculum listings for all Montana high schools, and request revisions to your listing. For further information, please contact [Billie Rusek](#) in the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education at (406) 444-0314.



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November 26, 2003

Dear Education Colleague,

At its recent meeting in Bozeman, the Montana Board of Regents decided that this year's high school seniors should be admitted to the Montana University System, by exemption if necessary, if they do not meet the recently adopted standards on mathematics proficiency. I have been asked to notify you of that decision, as quickly as possible, so you can share that information with your counselors, faculty members, parents and students.

You almost certainly already know that the Board of Regents, at its July 2003 meeting, adopted mathematics proficiency standards for admission to four-year programs in the Montana University System. Those standards will take affect in Fall 2004, and will impact Montana students seeking admission to the University System at that time.

Although they were supportive of the mathematics standard, school administrators throughout Montana felt that the new admissions policy unfairly impacted this year's high school seniors. The policy was adopted in mid-summer, some administrators said, after most students had already registered for their senior-year classes. Others argued that, if students had known about the policy, some of them would have taken additional high school mathematics coursework to prepare them for the new mathematics standard or to satisfy the so-called "rigorous high school core."

At this point, the number of Montana high school seniors who may not satisfy the new mathematics proficiency standards appears to be small. To resolve any questions of fairness, however, the Board of Regents decided to adopt the exemption policy. Students will still be expected to meet all of the other admissions standards adopted by the Montana University System. Based on their score on standardized tests, like the ACT or SAT, they may also be placed in remedial mathematics coursework at the university level.

But for this year's high school senior class, students who do not meet the mathematics proficiency standards for admission to a four-year program in the Montana University System will be granted an exemption to the standards.

If you have any questions, Dr. Jan Clinard in my office will be happy to try and answer them. She can be reached at (406) 444-0652 or jclinard@oche.montana.edu.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sheila Stearns
Commissioner of Higher Education